

HOUSE No. 1956

By Mr. Ayers of Quincy, petition of Bruce J. Ayers and John W. Scibak for legislation to establish an emergency equipment grant program for fire fighters. Public Safety and Homeland Security.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and Five.

AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT GRANT PROGRAM FOR FIREFIGHTERS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 Chapter 6A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 1996 Offi-
2 cial Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after section 18, the
3 following new section:—

4 Section 18¼. The Executive Office of Public Safety, in consul-
5 tation with the State Fire Marshal, the Massachusetts Fire Chiefs
6 Association and the Professional Firefighters of Massachusetts
7 AFL-CIO-CLC, shall annually promulgate a listing of fire equip-
8 ment devices and new technologies that are considered vital to the
9 safety, health and welfare of firefighters responding to fire emer-
10 gencies and other public safety situations. Said list shall indicate
11 the value of the stated equipment with respect to particular emer-
12 gency situations and shall further detail the number of pieces of
13 equipment recommended based on size of department and popula-
14 tion served.

15 Such list shall be finalized no later than February first of each
16 year and shall include items both vital to maintaining the integrity
17 and effectiveness of department equipment and the personal
18 health and safety of firefighters. This list should focus on min-
19 imum needs, recommended apparatus and suggested new tech-
20 nologies that have proven useful in managing and containing fires
21 and protecting the lives of response personnel and victims. Upon
22 completion, the summary list prepared under the provisions of this
23 section shall be forwarded to each local fire chief and the presi-

24 dent of the local representative labor organization corresponding
25 with said fire chief's district.

26 All local Fire Chiefs, in conjunction with the appropriate repre-
27 sentative labor organization corresponding with said fire chief's
28 district, shall annually audit each department to ascertain whether
29 the department meets the target criteria established in paragraph
30 one of this section. Deficiencies in recommended equipment and
31 the lack of available, suggested technologies in each department
32 shall be reported to the Secretary of the Executive Office of
33 Public Safety and the State Fire Marshal no later than March fif-
34 teenth of each year. Said Secretary shall then determine the cost of
35 supplying departments with all equipment necessary to eliminate
36 the deficiencies reported in accordance with this paragraph and
37 shall separately determine the cost of purchasing all suggested
38 equipment local departments have reported as not within their
39 possession. No later than April seventh of each year, said Secre-
40 tary shall submit the calculation of these costs to the house and
41 senate committees on ways and means and recommend the inclu-
42 sion of an appropriation within the annual general appropriation
43 act to rectify all deficient conditions at local fire departments and
44 to upgrade departments by providing the latest fire safety equip-
45 ment.

46 Subject to appropriation, said secretary shall make targeted
47 grants to local fire departments for the purpose of upgrading the
48 response and safety equipment to meet target criteria established
49 in paragraph one of this section. Such grants will be based on
50 need and the principle of maximizing the available appropriation
51 to account for the greatest improvement in public safety; provided
52 that at least fifty percent of any amount so appropriated is ear-
53 marked for distribution to fire departments serving populations
54 under 50,000 residents.